

BLACK'S FORT

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE TOWN OF ABINGDON, VIRGINIA

Volume IV, Issue IIII

APR/MAY/JUN 2011

HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF WASHINGTON COUNTY **CELEBRATES 75TH ANNIVERSARY**



Picture: Be sure to visit the newly restored Norfolk & Western Caboose located in Depot Square.

The caboose is a gift from Norfolk Southern Corporation in honor of Abingdon's longstanding Railroad History.

THIS ISSUE...

New Things Happening



New Businesses



Employees of the Year

THE TOWN OF ABINGDON 133 WEST MAIN STREET • ABINGDON, VIRGINIA • (276) 628-3167

| Page 3 | Town Manager Letter |
|--------------|----------------------------|
| Page 4 | People You Should Know |
| Page 5 | Happening 'Round Town |
| Page 6 | Barter Theatre Presents |
| Page 7 | Town Joins Forces |
| Page 8 | Going Green |
| Page 9 | Down at the Muster Grounds |
| Page 10 & 11 | New Businesses |
| Page 12 | Calendar |

Administration Town Manager Greg Kelly

| Mark Godbey | Finance Director |
|-----------------|-------------------------------------|
| | Tourism Director |
| Garrett Jackson | Town Planner |
| Deb Icenhour | Town Attorney |
| Marion Watts | Building Inspector |
| Joey Burke | Fire Chief |
| | Human Resources & Safety |

| Town Clerk | Cecile Rosenbaum |
|---|--------------------|
| Police Chief | Tony Sullivan |
| Information Technology | Floyd Bailey |
| Economic Development/Grant Writer | Jim Cowart |
| Public Works Director (Streets Divisio | n)John Dew |
| Public Works Director (Wastewater Di | ivision) Jim Smith |
| Parks & Recreation Director | Kevin Worley |

FROM THE UPPER DECK

It is hard to believe that another quarter has come and gone since our last newsletter went out. Time certainly does march on rapidly. As I hope you can see from the articles within we have many neat and upcoming things to report about. I hope you will find all of the articles to be enriching, informative and educational.

As for me, since my last writing, I have been mostly consumed with the budgeting process for the upcoming fiscal year. This process involves hours upon hours of expenditure and revenue examinations, evaluations and calculations between each of the department heads and me. It eventually culminates with a proposed draft, along with a detailed budget message, being submitted to the full body of the Council on or before April 1st. Thereafter, the Council, staff and I meet in various work sessions to



arrive at a final product for public hearing and adoption. The new budget is usually adopted in June and thereafter takes effect on July 1st of each year. I am pleased to report that no tax rate increases are anticipated for the upcoming year.

The current proposed budget encompasses great details of the overall operations of the town and provides me and my staff with the resources to maintain the town, deliver services and improve the town's capital assets for an entire year. This year, I have proposed that we keep with the current course of our Limited Capital Improvement Plan, with major capital improvements being made concerning our pedestrian sidewalk and trails projects along Whites Mill Road, Court, Oak Hill and McBroom Streets. We have also targeted an upgrade and widening project, including sidewalks and streetscaping, to the south side of Academy Drive, as well as a storm water management project in a portion of Country Club Estates. In addition, we have a \$2 million dollar upgrade to our sewer system in the works by way of modernizing our West Interceptor piping. These are just a few of the projects to expect to begin within the next fiscal year.

On another note, this crazy late winter and early spring weather has been enough to drive even the sanest person a little loony. I know that most of us have experienced at least a mild case of "cabin fever" over the past several months. As such, we should all find it very uplifting to see the labors of our Horticulture department spring to life throughout the town with a vibrant beauty that no other locality in our vicinity can come close to rivaling. Shortly after the eruption of the Spring flowers and tree blossoms, we will once again hear music in the streets, as "Abingdon's Music Experience" gets geared up for its 4th full year. We have several great concerts scheduled that we hope will bring out the masses to our downtown area. Spring is always an uplifting time and this year should be no exception.

As we enter into the warmer months, I hope that each of our residents and visitors will find something fun, exciting and entertaining to indulge themselves in. I welcome and look forward to seeing what the upcoming season has to offer.

Until next time, I hope to see you out and about.

Very truly yours,





Wanna receive e-mail updates on the low down in A-town? Email the Abingdon Wolf Whistle—wolfwhistle@abingdon-va.gov & "HEAR" all that is happening in Abingdon.

Check the Town out on







TOWN OF ABINGDON EMPLOYEES OF THE YEAR

At the February Council Meeting, Greg Kelly, Town Manager presented the following staff with Employee of the Year Awards:



Outstanding Employees of the Year

Kim Kingsley– Legal Assistant for the Town Attorney and has been employed with the Town for 3 yrs.

Jamie Chafin– Supervisor for the Street Department and has been employed with the Town for 5 yrs.

These employees received a paid day off, \$500 savings bond and a star trophy.

Employee of the Year

Tammy Montgomery—Cashier within the Finance Dept, employed with the Town for 4 yrs.

Pat Brown–Administrative Assistant for the Street Dept, employed with the Town for 12 yrs.

Dave Johnson—Head Mechanic for the Street Dept, employed with the Town for 3yrs.

Dan Callahan—Chief Operator for the Waste Water Plant, employed with the Town for 33 yrs.

These employees received a paid day off and a star trophy.





"ALL SHALL BE WELL" ON EAST VALLEY STREET

Have you noticed people walking in, what appear to be ,circles on property behind the Cave House? East Valley Street residents Sam and Jan Hurt have constructed a labyrinth on their property and invite the community to use it. On March 20, 2011, the Hurts and nearly 100 community members gathered at the Labyrinth, entitled, "All Shall Be Well" and formally dedicated it with remarks on the history of the property and the importance of such structures to ancient cultures. Two other labyrinths exist at the Christ the King Catholic Church and on the campus of Virginia Highlands Community College. The Veterans Memorial Park Foundation plans to construct one, based on the "Abingdon, England" design, at Veterans Memorial Park, according to their park master plan.

NEED DIRECTIONS?

The Town and Advance Abingdon, Abingdon's Main Street Organization, have partnered to install new pedestrian way finding signs along the Main Street corridor, to promote foot traffic to local business and those no more than a block away. The signs, manufactured by Charleston Forge in Boone, NC, will be located at intersections along Main Street, as well as the Creeper Trailhead, Depot Square and Farmers Market, to encourage walkers and shoppers to explore a bit further in their search for the Abingdon experience. Look for the new signs to be installed around the first week in May.



HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF WASHINGTON COUNTY, 75 YEARS YOUNG!



On April 7, 2011, the Historical Society of Washington County will celebrate it's 75th Anniversary, with a reception and dinner at the Martha Washington Inn. Rated as one of the top historical societies in the country, the HSWC woes a tremendous amount of credit to the countless volunteers who make the visitors experience a pleasure and are always available to assist in inquiries. The society can trace its roots to an organizational meeting at the Washington County Courthouse on April 6, 1936, organized by the Black's Fort Chapter of the DAR and its then Regent, Mrs. Charles H. Butt. Visit the HSWC and learn about our history...and your own!

The Town of Abingdon is now going online to sell surplus equipment and vehicles. If you are interested in viewing or bidding on the Town's surplus items, follow this link: http://www.publicsurplus.com/sms/abingdon,va/list/current?orgid=98036

You can also view and bid on other surplus items from all of the United States and Canada from the provider's homepage at www.publicsurplus.com. The site offers features including a search specific item or category, and a search by state, territory, or specific agency.

You must register with the site to bid on items.



have audiences clapping their hands and stomping their feet," said Richard Rose, producing artistic director of Barter Theatre. Backed by a four-piece band, just like the way Williams performed, Jason Petty gives a personal look at Williams growing up, how he became famous, who influenced the legendary singer songwriter and performers today who are influenced by Williams. Go back to the very beginning when Hank was given his very first guitar all the way to how Hank has made a lasting impression music, even after almost 50 years after his death. Even now, Williams is recognized as being in the top of the most influential singer songwriters. "Hank and My Honky Tonk Heroes" has played to sold out houses across the country from Broadway to Nashville. Conceived and written by Petty, the idea sparked when Petty was asked to portray Williams at the Ryman Auditorium in Nashville in the musical biography of Williams' life titled "Lost Highway." "I later won the Off Broadway equivalent of a Tony Award, an Obie Award, for outstanding performance in 'Lost Highway," said Petty. After finishing the run of that show, Petty began going through his trunk full of notes from his research of Williams. "It seems his music and influence still touch the same nerve with people as it did some 65 years ago," said Petty. Since singing and storytelling was in Petty's blood – instilled at an early age by his grandmother - Petty pieced the stories he had heard and Elvis Has Left the Building May 13-August 13 From the songs together in "Hank and My Honky Tonk Heroes." "Growing up on a farm in middle Tennessee, I love front porch storytelling," said Petty." Petty remembers being at his grandparents' farm house in Primm Springs, Tn. "Front porch swing, just like in the movies. My Grandmother would shell peas and sing the old country songs from the 40's and 50's. She and my Grandfather would weave stories of the old days and I would sit enthralled at the mention of simpler times with no TV, just an old Silvertone

radio tuned to the Grand Ol' Opry." Jason and his band make you feel like your hearing a friend tell a story on your porch," said Richard Rose, producing artistic director of Barter Theatre. "Add these great songs to the mix and you have a Sunday afternoon at Mamaw's house with friends and family." Not only will the great songs of Hank Williams Sr. be performed, other songs are in the show as well. "I picked the other artists due to the fact that they were huge influences on a young Hank Williams...i.e., Jimmie Rodgers, Carter Family, Roy Acuff and Ernest Tubb. I chose the other artists because they were hugely influenced by Hank. Those include George Jones, Webb Pierce, Faron Young, Elvis and Alan Jackson," said Petty. Abingdon, Va. – Hank Williams Sr. is known the Other songs included are "Will the Circle Be Unbroken," world over as the most influential singer/songwriter ever. "Wine Me Up" and "Midnight in Montgomery." "Hank Now, acclaimed performer and musician Jason Petty, and My Honky Tonk Heroes" is a special presentation by along with his four piece band, is bringing the authentic Barter Theatre playing April 21 – May 21 and is sponsored and insightful story of Hank to life in "Hank and My by Food City, Strongwell, 11 Connects/WJHL-TV, Bristol Honky Tonk Heroes" for a special presentation at Barter Herald Courier, TriCities.com, The Business Journal, Theatre April 21 – May 21. "Chock full of Hank's hits WBRF-FM 98.1 and WABN AM & FM. Barter Theatre is including 'Your Cheatin' Heart,' 'I'm So Lonesome I partly funded by the NEA and the VCA. For tickets and Could Cry,' 'Hey Good Lookin',' 'Lovesick Blues' and more information on "Hank and My Honky Tonk Heroes," many, more, 'Hank and My Honky Tonk Heroes' will call (276) 628-3991 or visit www.BarterTheatre.com.



Also Playing at Barter Theatre:

Circumference of a Squirrel April 30-August 13 Starring Nicholas Piper, directed by Katy Brown, this comical show looks at the things we inherit from our parents besides DNA. At the heart of all the circles in Chester's life is one big hole. How does he fill it and when should he just let go?

the writing duo of Barter's smash hit comedy, Don't Cry For Me, Margaret Mitchell, comes a new comedy about The Colonel, Elvis' promoter. When the real Elvis goes missing and the Colonel is in danger of the mobsters he owes money to, he gets the next best thing...Elvis impersonators! How long can he fool everyone?

TOWN OF ABINGDON'S UNITED WAY CAMPAIGN HONORED AT AWARDS LUNCHEON

Pictured are United Way Cabinet Members for the Town of Abingdon, Deb Icenhour, Kim Kingsley and Tonya Triplett who attended the Awards Luncheon and accepted individual awards as well as the Growth & Innovation Award and the Spirit of the Community Award for their leadership efforts in helping the Town to surpass its goal and help the Washington Co. - Russell Co. United Way Campaign to meet its ambitious goal of more than one Million Dollars. Congrats!



MASTER GARDNER CLASS JOINS FORCES WITH TOWN OF ABINGDON



The 2011 Master Gardner Class has concluded its classroom hours after holding seventeen (17) three-hour sessions at the Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center. Each of the thirty (30) students, now considered Master Gardner Interns, who completed the academics and scored adequately on the examinations will now be expected to contribute a total of fifty (50) hours of volunteer work to approved public projects. Some of the approved projects are right here in the Town of Abingdon and have captured the attention of many of the students. The heirloom gardens around the Fields-Penn House at Cummings and Main as well as the gardens at The Muster Grounds and Retirement on Colonial Road are two of the sites. Town employees along with a host of the Master Gardner Interns will be hard at work at both locations in the very near future.

Pictured above is Ann Newman, Horticulturist for the Town and a new Master Gardner Intern. Ms. Newman completed the class along with the Town Attorney, Deb Icenhour. Ms. Newman is pictured with her picnic-themed table of refreshments prepared for the class at one of its sessions.

The other pictures above feature Kevin Sigmon, Town Arborist, who lectured to the group on the topics of pruning trees and shrubs. Center: Members of the Overmountain Victory Trail Association, Black's Fort Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution and William Campbell Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution, who presented the Master Gardner Class with ideas for a project at the Muster Grounds.

ABINGDON RECEIVES FUNDING FOR **ENERGY EFFICIENCY**

The Town of Abingdon's Go Green Committee was awarded funds from the Virginia Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy (DMME) for an energy audit and energy efficiency training project. The funds will provide households within Town limits with a rebate program for energy audits. Households that have an energy audit conducted on their home by either a RESNET (Residential Energy



Services Network) or BPI (Building Performance Institute) certified professional will have the opportunity to mail in their receipt of payment for an energy audit to the Town and receive a rebate check for 50% of the energy audit cost.

To increase services available, DMME also provided funding to train local contractors and other local professionals in the RESNET and BPI certifications at no cost to the training attendees. After June of this year, this project will have trained eight RESNET HERS (Home Energy Rating System) Raters (a program that is also accepted by the Mortgage Industry and used to certify the EPA Energy Star for New Construction program), eight BPI Building Analysts (a rigorous energy auditor certification that also emphasizes health and safety) and eight BPI Residential Building Envelope Whole House Air Leakage Control Installers (the latest in weatherization trainings focusing on insulation and air sealing).

People Incorporated of Virginia's Green Building Center, which has been conducted these trainings for over a year now, will provide the training services and its Operations Manager and Town of Abingdon Go Green Committee member, Nick Safay, is coordinating the project along with Town staff.

The Town is very excited about this project as it will provide rebates for approximately 100 energy audits and have twenty-four local construction industry professionals trained in the latest nationally accredited energy efficiency trainings that they will then use in everyday practices and increase the energy efficiency of Town households, reduce utility bills and enhance the lives and economy of Abingdon residents.

For more information please feel free to contact Nick Safay at the People Incorporated offices at 276-623-9000 or email him at <u>nsafay@peopleinc.net</u>. The Town's Go Green Committee will also be distributing information regarding this project at its Earth Day event, Saturday, April 23rd from 10:00am to 1:00pm across the street from the Abingdon Farmer's Market.

GO GREEN NEWS

Old man winter is on its way out and we're anxiously awaiting the arrival of Spring! With Spring comes many opportunities to get out and experience not only the beauty of our area

but also various activities in and around our commu-

nity. One of those activities is the annual Earth Day Celebration that is held each year in Abingdon. This year the Earth Day Celebration will be held on Saturday, April 23rd from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm at the Fields Penn House which is located on the corner of Main Street and Cummings Street. There will be dozens of exhibit booths set up by local businesses and green organizations who will answer questions, share ideas and give educational materials on how you can "GO GREEN". One of the highlights of the Earth Day Celebration will be the rain barrel workshop. This year we are adding a worm compost demonstration as well. There will also be plenty of activities for the kids including free face painting and an inflatable train. Also, this is the perfect time to get rid of those old electronics that you have gathering dust in your attic or basement as we are offering a free e-waste recycling drop off. For more information please visit our Facebook page at www.facebook .com/ AbingdonGoGreen or call Sherrie Leab at 276-676-2209.

EARTH DAY CELEBRATION **EARTH DAY** HEY KIDSIII

TOWN TO HOST NATIONAL TRAILS CONFERENCE



Abingdon and the Overmountain Victory Trail Association will host the 13th Biennial Conference on the National Scenic & Historic Trails May 14-19 at the Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center. This is only the 3rd time the conference has been held east of the Mississippi and the 1st time in the Southeast Region. For more information and to register, please visit:

http://www.pnts.org

Attention: The Muster Grounds Interpretive Center will be OPEN for visitation during the **National Trails Conference**

MUSTER GROUNDS RECEIVE SUPPORT FROM DAR



Patricia Musick Hatfield, State Regent of the Virginia Daughters of the American Revolution, recently presented a check for \$20,000 to Mayor Emeritus, Lois Humphreys, Councilman Rick Humphreys and Director of Planning, Garrett Jackson to be used for the purchase of interpretive displays and exhibits at the Abingdon Muster Grounds.

The check represents the first installment of a pledge made by the VA Society, DAR last July, to raise over the next three years, for the museum-quality display cases and exhibits, to house artifacts and other items related to the Colonial Backcountry and the Battle of Kings Mountain 1780, a pivotal American victory in the American Revolutionary War.





J & M SWEET SPOT



When Michelle Anderson moved to Abingdon in 2005, she never expected to own a business on Main Street, but it makes sense. Her grandfather, Charlie Ellison, owned a business in the Depot Square area many years ago. Michelle likes that she has close ties to a piece of Abingdon's history. Shortly after her move to Abingdon, she did a catering job for a local B&B. The success of that event got people talking and requests for her work gave birth to a full-service catering business. Michelle wanted work with a more regular schedule and when she found an open space on Main Street, things just "fell together." In November, 2010, Michelle opened J & M Sweet Spot at 464 B West Main Street, in the Johnson Center. Michelle has a sunny disposition that goes right along with this small but bright and cheery "spot" on Main. As is common in many area restaurants, the walls of the Sweet Spot showcase the work of local artists, most by Robert Weisfeld. While the Spot features sweets like homemade lemon cake, cheesecake and peanut butter pie, there is much more--a lunch menu of freshly made quiches, chicken salad and in the cooler months, pepper belly chili. Michelle plans to add cool soups to her menu beginning in May or June. Special orders including custom pastries are also available by calling J&M Sweet Spot at 525-1158. Shop hours are Monday through Saturday, 10 - 5 and 11 - 4 on Sunday.

LUNA PIZZA



Luna Pizza, in Abingdon is probably the best kept secret at this time. With just a basic shopping mall façade, a lit sign above that simply states "Luna", and a glowing "Pizza" neon sign in the front window, you feel that perhaps just an old ordinary pizzeria is located at this location. But, once you open the door and are blasted by the flavors and scents of their homemade breads, doughs, sauces, and seasonings, Instantly, you know you have not found any ordinary place. Upon entry, you feel as though you've turned a corner on a city street and found a back alley pop art gallery, authentic Italian foods, Sweet Desserts, and your path and tables illuminated by overhanging party lights.

Their delicious pizza is served by the slice, or by the pizza pie. Choices of toppings, vegetables, soups, appetizers, calzones, and Luna Rockets (their version of a sub), are always homemade.

Local farms are used as often as possible. Luna's goal is to offer organic and all-natural "Good Food".

Never processed, nothing artificial and with no chemical alterations.

Beer, Wine and Soda available on premises.



ANTHONY'S DESSERTS

Anthony Perkins helped his grandmother with holiday baking as a child and his love for pastries was born. A native of Honaker, Virginia, Anthony opened Anthony's Desserts on November 5, 2010. Enter his space at 401 East Main Street and the smell of freshly baked goods greets you. Choose from his selection of brownies, cookies, key lime pie, tiramisu, chocolate cream pie and more...but don't miss his trademark cheesecake, a delectable meal in dessert form. Add a cup of his Zazzy'z specialty coffee blend and you're set for a delight ful culinary experience. Anthony readily engages in conversation while he prepares his pastries behind the check-out counter. This young entrepreneur received his culinary training in Pittsburg and returned to the Abingdon area seven years ago to be closer to family, some of whom often serve as his four dusted assistants. According to Anthony, his recipes are constantly evolving; his customers and those of the local restaurants who serve his creations have much to look forward to. Before you exit his shop, check out the local artists' works and the photo of Itty Bit, his wee canine companion. Anthony can be reached at 623-1500 and will be happy to take your order



ALL ABOUT HER



Bobbi Carraway exudes genuine charm and grace as she talks about her new shop, All About Her Clothing and Accessories. Prior to opening her store, she worked in industrial sales and in business staffing where she heard frequent complaints from women. They couldn't find work appropriate clothing that didn't look like a "teenager or grandma." Bobbi set out to offer stylish but comfortable business attire and she has succeeded. Her racks display colorful dresses and skirts in modern prints and classic t-shirts and shrugs in complementing colors. "Women should not be afraid of color," she says. "Add a bright red accessory to that black outfit." Influenced by a very stylish mother who, in her 70's, dresses "to the nines" even for a trip to the store, Bobbi believes that age has noth-

ing to do with style. She can help coordinate a stylish look that will take women through their day, no matter what the schedule is. Her line of accessories includes lots of jewelry and eye catching handbags. "Even if a customer doesn't buy anything when she's here, I want her to feel better when she leaves," says Bobbi. All About Her is open Monday through Saturday at 793 West Main Street in Highlands shopping center, across from Dairy Queen. Give Bobbi a call at 525-1924.

CAUTINDAR OF EVENTS



Town Council Meetings
First Monday of Each
Month
7:30pm
Town Hall
Public Welcome



Town of Abingdon Offices Will be CLOSED on May 30th for

Memorial Day

Board of Architectural Review
First Wednesday of Each
Month
5:00pm
Town Hall

Public Welcome



Board of Zoning Appeals
Second Tuesday of Each
Month (if called)
6:00pm
Town Hall
Public Welcome



Plumb Alley Day
May 28th
9am-3pm
Everyone Welcome



Planning Commission
Fourth Monday of Each
Month
5:30pm
Town Hall
Public Welcome



Memorial Day Concert

May 28th

6-9pm

Market Pavilion

FRF.F.



National Trails Conference May 14-19th



Veterans Memorial Park Service for Memorial Day May 29th